



Advisory
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Summer Fun on Tap
At Lake Oroville

OROVILLE -- Lake Oroville, which filled nearly to the brim just in time for summer fun, is offering world class fishing, camping, picnicking and swimming in scenic Butte County. Biking, hiking and horseback riding also are available on trails around the reservoir, swollen to near capacity by late May rains.

Easy to reach but rarely crowded, Lake Oroville has a hometown Northern California style that makes it a favorite with those in the know.

“Lake Oroville offers a full menu of summer lake recreation, with plenty of easy lake boating and convenient camping, including Oroville’s trademark floating campsites,” says John Ford, DWR Tour Guide at Oroville Dam. “Lake Oroville has an easy relaxed pace all through summer. Our Visitors Center overlooking the lake is full of photos, video and print information about the lake and the region. Visitors are welcome, too, at the Feather River Fish Hatchery, where salmon are nurtured for the Feather River.”

Convenient Lake Recreation

Lake Oroville is 75 miles north of Sacramento, easily reachable via State Highway 70 or US 99. Oroville Dam, tallest in the nation at 770 feet, commands a panoramic view of the upper Sacramento Valley, including the Sutter Buttes, faced as the world’s smallest mountain range. The lake, with a capacity of more than 3.5 million acre-feet, is the major storage reservoir for California’s State Water Project (SWP), operated by the Department of Water Resources (DWR). The SWP provides at least part of the water supply for 23 million Californians and approximately 750,000 acres of irrigated farmland. The dam’s powerplant generates electricity that helps transport SWP water to areas of need

.Lake Oroville Campsites

Campsites include the 51-site Lime Saddle Campground, Loafer Creek Campground with more than 130 individual sites and six group sites, the 74-campsite Bidwell Canyon Campground and more than 80 campsites accessible only by boat. Equestrian camps in the Loafer Creek Recreation Area are located near an extensive trail network. Floating camps are special attractions at Lake Oroville – two-story platforms anchored in scenic coves, each with on-board restrooms and propane barbecues.

Most recreational facilities at the lake are in the Lake Oroville State Recreation Area, administered and operated by the Department of Parks and Recreation. For camping information at Oroville, call State Parks at (530) 538-2200. Reservations can be made by calling Reserve America at 800-444-7275.

Fishing At and Near Oroville

Fishing is a prime attraction at Lake Oroville, with both warm water and cold water species to thrill anglers.

Bass fishing in Lake Oroville is typically excellent in late spring and early summer. Most are spotted bass in the one- to two-pound size range, with some bigger fish, including largemouth bass, in the mix. Lake Oroville also hosts smallmouth and redeye bass, so it is possible for anglers to catch four different species of bass in the same day. Numerous bass fishing tournaments are held at the lake.

Boating, Two Marinas at Lake Oroville

Houseboats, water skiing boats and fishing craft may be rented at the lake's two marinas: Bidwell Canyon Marina (800) 637-1767, and Lake Oroville Marina (800) 834-7517. Lake Oroville Marina has a new concessionaire, Forever Resorts, that operates more than 50 marinas in the United States.

Many boaters value Lake Oroville, a big lake with extensive arms, for its size and variety of boating conditions. Like other multi-purpose reservoirs, Lake Oroville's surface level peaks in the spring and fluctuates during the year as the lake performs its various water supply, storage, water quality and flood control functions.

Boaters who prefer constant surface levels may prefer to recreate on the nearby forebays, where levels do not fluctuate. The North Forebay is exclusively for use by non-power craft - sailing boats, as well as canoes and kayaks. The South Forebay is designated for power boats.

The Forebay Aquatic Center, at the North Forebay, is a facility serving non-power boating needs. Operated through a CSU, Chico student program, it provides equipment rentals, including canoes and kayaks. Lessons are available. The Center is open throughout the vacation season, from mid-May through October 31. The Thermalito Afterbay, where surface levels do fluctuate, is an enjoyable venue also for personal watercraft operation.

Nearby Angling Spots

“One of the bonuses about fishing in the Lake Oroville area is all the quality fishing available nearby,” advises Eric See, DWR fishery biologist at Lake Oroville. The Department of Fish and Game stocks catchable trout on a regular basis in the Thermalito Forebay, the small coldwater lake just downstream of Lake Oroville, he notes. The Thermalito Afterbay, a shallow lake just downstream from the Forebay, is a productive largemouth bass fishery.

The 5,500-acre Oroville Wildlife Area, just west of State Highway 70 along the Feather River below the fore- and afterbays, contains dozens of small ponds. The wildlife area features excellent spring fishing for bass and sunfish. The area is ideal for bank fishing, or angling from small boats or float tubes.

Feather River Fishing

Beginning in June, See advises, the Feather River provides a wonderful summertime salmon fishery, as multitudes of salmon migrate up the Feather for eventual spawning in the fall. These fish range from 15 to 40 pounds and can be caught with a variety of lures and baits, both from boats and shore. A less-widely known springtime steelhead run occurs on the Feather, starting in April and continuing throughout the summer. Many of these steelhead range from 2 to 4 pounds and can be caught with flies, lures or bait, says See.

Frenchman and Davis Lakes

Upstream from Oroville, reachable via Highway 70, trout angling, boating and camping are available at Lake Davis and Frenchman Lake, two smaller SWP lakes, set in the scenic Plumas National Forest. About 50 miles northwest of Reno, Frenchman Lake long has been a favorite trout angling lake for residents of the Feather River country and western Nevada. Lake Davis, west of Frenchman, near Portola in Plumas County, is well stocked with trout for this vacation season by the Department of Fish and Game.

These smaller lakes are located in higher, more remote country than Lake Oroville, in a quiet, soothing Sierra atmosphere. Lake Davis has a water surface of about 4,000 acres and a 32-mile shoreline. Frenchman is smaller, with a 1,500-acre surface and a 21-mile shoreline. Since both lakes are above 5,600 feet in altitude, even sunny days are moderate in temperature and nights are cool.

Lake Oroville Visitors Center

The Lake Oroville Visitors Center, overlooking the lake, provides visual displays, videotapes, maps and publications describing the lake and regional attractions. Videotapes dramatically replay construction of the massive Oroville Dam during the early 1960s.

A 47-foot-high viewing tower, equipped with free telescopes, gives visitors a sweeping view of the lake, dam and surrounding region. The Center has an ADA Chaparral Trail -- three-

quarters of mile in length -- for wheelchair visitors.

Operated jointly by DWR and State Parks, the Visitors Center is open daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., except Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's. Admission is free. The phone number is (530) 538-2219. For information on Lake Oroville tours, call John Ford, DWR Tour Guide, at (530) 534-2306.

During the summer, the Visitors Center presents a summer speaker series free to the public each Wednesday, from June 15 through August 31, from 7 to 8 p.m. Gold panning is available there every Sunday from 1 to 2 p.m. from Memorial Day Weekend through Labor Day. This activity is free to those under 18, with a \$2 charge for those over 18.

Trails Abound

Bikers, equestrian riders and hikers will find more than 40 miles of scenic, multipurpose trails available to meet their needs at Lake Oroville.

Oroville Community Attractions

The City of Oroville and its surrounding region offer many attractions beyond those of the lake. Oroville is a historic Gold Rush community, with graceful neighborhoods, a developing recreational attraction at Riverbed Park along the Feather River, motels, hotels and restaurants, bed and breakfast accommodations, and leisure entertainment at two major Indian casinos.

History buffs will appreciate Oroville's historic legacy by viewing the Bidwell Bar Suspension Bridge, built in 1856, first of its kind west of the Mississippi River, and visiting the Ishi Monument. The monument memorializes Ishi, last of the Yahi Indians. Ishi's final years helped University of California anthropologists understand and document California Indian folkways.

An 1863 Chinese temple at 1500 Broderick Street provides a dramatic reminder of Oroville's Chinese legacy. The temple is unusual also in providing chapels for adherents of three sects -- Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism.

Nearby Table Mountain is a visually distinct landmark on the local horizon.

Feather Falls, at 640-feet the sixth highest waterfall in the United States, is located east of Lake Oroville. Hikers can view the falls by taking trails from a trailhead on Lumpkin Road near the historic community of Feather Falls. To reach the trailhead from Oroville, take Olive Highway east to Forbestown Road, and then go north on Lumpkin. Follow signs to the Feather Falls trailhead, about one mile off Lumpkin.

More information on regional attractions and lodging can be obtained from the Oroville Area Chamber of Commerce (1-800-655-GOLD) and the Oroville Visitor and Tourism Bureau (1-888-OROVILLE). The Oroville Chamber provides a full range of recreational

information, including fishing tournaments, on its Website at www.lakeoroville.net.

Summer-Fall Events

On the night of July 4, a spectacular Fourth of July fireworks display, free of charge, is presented at Oroville Dam. This event is a popular mid-summer Oroville tradition. Thousands line the dam crest and occupy hundreds of boats on the lake to enjoy a magnificent display of pyrotechnics over the lake, with skybursts reflected in the waters of Lake Oroville. Free bus transportation from downtown Oroville is available for fireworks spectators.

From mid-August to mid-November, people can view Chinook salmon---a large and easily seen salmon species -- in the Feather River near the Feather River Fish Hatchery as they gather for spawning.

Fishing for salmon in the Oroville Area is popular during the summer and early fall as the fish migrate up the Feather River.

Seeing salmon close up is possible through viewing windows built into the fish ladder leading from the river into the fish hatchery. Best time period for viewing adult fish in the ladder is September to mid-October. The most opportune season for watching artificial spawning in the hatchery is October.

Oroville holds a traditional Salmon Festival the fourth Saturday in September in conjunction with the spawning period for Feather River salmon. This year's Salmon Festival will occur on September 24, last Saturday in the month, with events and celebrations focused at the Feather River Fish Hatchery.

Feather River Fish Hatchery

The Feather River Fish Hatchery grows millions of salmon each year to help enhance Feather River salmon populations. Operated by California's Department of Fish and Game, the hatchery is located alongside the Feather River. It is easily reached via a bridge from the City of Oroville.

The hatchery parking lot affords excellent views of spawning season Chinook salmon starting in mid-July when they will start gathering near the fishing ladder entrance to the hatchery. Starting in mid-September, you can see the fish spawning naturally in the river.

The Feather River Fish Hatchery is worth a visit to see displays and information panels describing salmon life cycles. Starting about mid-September, you can see hatchery crews spawning the fish artificially.

The hatchery was built by DWR during the 1960s to mitigate for loss of Feather River spawning upstream of Oroville Dam. A \$2 million project in 1998 modernized and expanded the hatchery, updating displays and exhibitry and making the facility easier to

enjoy by those with limited mobility. Native plants have been reintroduced at the hatchery to enhance riparian habitat along the Feather River.

Open all year free of charge, the facility is handicapped accessible, with artful displays on salmon lifecycles. For information on hatchery operations, contact Anna Kastner, hatchery manager, at (530) 538-2222. To arrange a hatchery tour, contact John Ford, DWR Tour Guide at Oroville, at (530) 534-2306.

For more information on Lake Oroville, visit DWR's "Welcome to Lake Oroville" Web site. The address is: <http://www.lakeoroville.water.ca.gov/>.

The Department of Water Resources operates and maintains the State Water Project, provides dam safety and flood control and inspection services, assists local water districts in water management and water conservation planning, and plans for future statewide water needs.

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